



**Committee on
Homeland Security Democrats**
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

<http://hsc-democrats.house.gov>

For Immediate Release:
October 20, 2005

Contact: Jennifer Porter Gore
Nadra Harrison
202.226.2616

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson Committee on Homeland Security

Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity
Hearing on “The London Bombings: Protecting Civilian Targets from Terrorist Attacks, Part II”

“Like all Americans, I was shocked and repulsed by the terrorist attacks in London. This attack should serve as a reminder that America and its close allies continue to face a determined enemy that thinks nothing of slaughtering innocent people. I was troubled; I have to say, by Mr. Chertoff’s comments yesterday before the Katrina Committee that he had to get his house in order. How many disasters, attacks, and close-calls is it going to take before the Department of Homeland Security wakes up?

“First we saw the hurricanes. Then we saw the disconnect between the federal government and New York officials about threats to the City’s subway systems. Two days ago, the Baltimore tunnel was closed and I heard – as the tunnel closed – conflicting reports about whether it was a real or fake threat. Mr. Chertoff, while you have been putting your house in order, it has crumbled to the ground from neglect to its foundation and walls.

“Trust is important. I, along, with every other American person, must be able to trust the Department of Homeland Security to perform at 100%, if not more. I am close to losing all trust. With regards to our mass transit and passenger rail systems, I am especially worried. Almost four years after the September 11th terrorist attacks, passenger rail and transit security remains a Department of Homeland Security afterthought.

“While the United States has spent over \$18 billion on aviation security since 9/11, we managed to offer only \$717 million for transit security. That simply falls far too short, especially when one considers that Americans take mass transit 16 times more often than they travel by air. The “National Strategy for Transportation Security” that the Department recently submitted that was supposed to lay the groundwork for securing our mass transit systems was lacking. Indeed, it did not meet Congressionally-mandated requirements.

“Speaking of which, I want to know when DHS will start using the National Response Plan. Secretary Chertoff told members of Congress yesterday that the Department did not have an integrated plan in place when Hurricane Katrina struck. What about the National Response Plan? Did he forget about it? Is it another document that contractors put together that wastes taxpayer dollars because the Department doesn’t think it is good? I’d like to know.

“One thing I would like to hear from today’s witnesses is when the Department will finish the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. Andy Purdy from the Department testified two days ago that he couldn’t tell us definitively when it was going to be completed. I hope you can do better than that.”

###